

# Mustangs pry Catholic League title away from Blazers

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STAFF WRITER

## VOLLEYBALL

It's going to be at least eight years before any team duplicates Livonia Ladywood's string of consecutive Detroit Catholic League volleyball championships.

Birmingham Marian ended Ladywood's run of Catholic League volleyball championships at nine Thursday with a gutty 15-9, 15-11 victory in the finals at Madonna University.

Might as well plan to see palm trees outside the Madonna gym as to expect someone other than Ladywood to win the title.

"How far back do you want to go?" Coach Stephanie Storen of the Mustangs said. "I played four years at Marian and I've coached the last three and this is the first one we've won."

"Traditionally, Ladywood always has their (championship) T-shirts made up before the game. That gets in your head a little bit."

Not this time.

"After nine consecutive years, you expect to win," Ladywood

coach Larry Wyatt said. "That makes it hurt just that much more, especially for the seniors." "But we knew it was going to be a battle because we split with them during the season."

"Give credit to Marian. We were up in both games and they came back to beat us."

"We've been doing that all year," Storen said of her team's trait of coming from behind. "I hate it. We always get behind and then one point at a time we fight our way back. The girls have a lot of heart."

A key for the Mustangs (28-7) was their ability to neutralize Blazers setter Melissa Buckshaw.

Buckshaw was flicking the ball up early in the first game, and Marian Bartee was slamming it down. Bartee had five kills as Ladywood roared to a 9-2 lead in the opening game.

Another key was the ability of the Mustangs to slow the ball up at the net, giving their back row time to get to the ball.

Sarah Cnshen typified that play at a critical point in the second game.

The score was tied at 11 and Ladywood was digging deep to hold Marian off. The Blazers were pounding the ball over the net and the Mustangs were just hanging in there, getting it back.

It appeared Ladywood was going to get another side out when Cnshen, sprawled on the floor over her knees, somehow managed to dig a kill out of the varnish and get it back over the net. Marian won the point on an error to take a 12-11 lead.

Ladywood won the next serve but Marian got it right back and Sarah Kreher served out the match. Katie Henry made it 14-11 on a tip kill at the net and Kreher had an unreturnable serve for the match.

"We wanted to disrupt their attack, make them pass the ball," Storen said.

The Mustangs got the ball deeper once they trailed in the first game and this seemed to interrupt the Blazers' flow. They also tried to keep the ball on the side away from Bartee.

But the vital facet in the second game was that Marian just frustrated Ladywood's ability to get the ball down.

Kreher's serving was a key in the first game, too. She took over with the score 9-2 and served five straight winning points to

get her team back in the game. Ladywood took service away from Kreher but Marian got it right back and Henry served six consecutive winners for a 13-9 lead. Erin Poglitis served two straight winners, the match ending on a tip kill by Katie Woch.

Bartee served five straight winners to spark Ladywood to a 6-1 lead in the second game and it was 10-3 with the Blazers in control at one point.

But Marian refused to buckle. The Mustangs chipped away and shaved the margin to 10-6.

# Raiders 'play well' despite loss to Vikes

## VOLLEYBALL

Walled Lake Central overcame a five-point deficit in the second game Wednesday to defeat host North Farmington in volleyball, 15-6, 15-11.

The Raiders jumped in front for a 5-0 lead, but "their comeback began when we started passing the ball tight on net, and they're just way too big for us to cover that," North coach Dob Calanchi said. "We gave them some of the best sets they had all night."

Despite the score of the first game, the Raiders played well, as an intense practice Tuesday carried over to the match, according to Calanchi.

"We didn't let up in Game 1," she said. "It's just they were blocking us and our coverage was not reacting fast enough. It took half the first game for our hitters to adjust, which they did. But we struggled getting serves over, and that was what prevented us from making a comeback."

Despite the loss, Calanchi was more pleased with the team effort and performance than she

was Monday when North lost to Plymouth Salem.

"I'm very competitive and I like to win, but I also like what I saw from the team last night," she said. "We didn't go down without a fight."

"Fifteen-11 against a taller, more experienced team; that's not bad. From varsity to JV to freshmen, their entire program is just big in terms of size, and that didn't stop my girls at all."

Meghan Callahan was 10-of-11 serving with two aces, Elina Pilnits 7-of-8 (one ace) and Lisa St. Charles 6-of-7 (one ace).

Amy Berke was 8-of-9 attacking with four kills and Pilnits 9-of-11 (two kills). Lisa Seher was 14-of-15 and St. Charles 8-of-11 setting with four assists each.

Jessica St. Charles was 6-of-7 and Berke 4-of-6 on receiving serves for the Raiders, who are 2-8 in the WLAA.

**Chargers defeat Falcons**

Farmington coach Alex Perrin

was not displeased with his team's play Wednesday either despite a 6-15, 9-15 loss to host Livonia Churchill.

"They beat us but we played well, as opposed to we played poorly," he said. "In the first game, we avoided the negative mood we would have been in, and we became a little less predictable."

"I thought Randin Brown had a nice setting match. It's her first year setting, and she's becoming more consistent."

"We fought the whole time. That was nice. It was a nice match to be a part of."


Jocelyn Atkins and Julie Kimmel were 16-of-17 attacking with six and three kills. Jessi Halliday was 9-of-12 with three kills. Brown had 14 assists.

Atkins also had three blocks and three digs. Kimmel two blocks and seven digs. Halliday also had six digs.

The Falcons (4-6 WLAA) won the exhibition third game for the first time, 15-13. Christine Baker had a nice game to lead Farmington to the win, according to Perrin.

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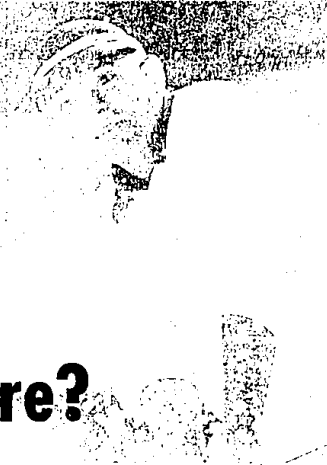
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